

What Next? On the Campaign Against the Russian Right Wing

By the time this issue is off the press, the campaign against the Right wingers will probably have been completed by decisive organizational conclusions: the removal of Rykov, Tomsky and Bucharin from the Central Committee (Bucharin only from the Political Bureau). Whether matters will come to the expulsion of the Right wing leaders from the Party and to their administrative punishment at the next stage, depends partly upon the conduct of the Right leaders* but primarily on the extent of the acuteness with which the Stalinist staff will feel the need of making a turn to the Right. For this is how matters now stand at the top. Just as the smashing of the Left Opposition at the Fifteenth Congress in December 1927 immediately preceded the Left turn, which officially opened on February 15, 1928, so the inevitable turn to the Right will have to be preceded by an organizational smashing of the Right Opposition. Why must it be preceded? Because if this turn should be made with the presence of the Rights in the Central Committee, the latter would declare their solidarity with the turn, and by that, would not only make their expulsion from the Party difficult but in general would additionally mar the perfection of the general line. But this is only one side of the matter. There is also another, no less important.

Who is to Be Responsible for the Past

Long before the decisive organizational crushing of the Left Opposition, a new split was being prepared in the bosom of the leading majority of that time, without which the turn to the Right could not even be thought of, not to speak of the fact that there would be nobody to blame for the Right wing course of yesterday. And now when the inevitable turn of the general line to the Right is being delineated on the horizon, one must presume, a priori, that a new split is taking shape in the ruling group which will be revealed only after the turn to the Right. It cannot be otherwise. For, on the one hand, not only in the Party—there is no need to speak of this—but even in the apparatus itself, there are elements who took the ultra-Left zig-zag seriously as a systematic Left course; these elements will resist any approaching turn. On the other hand somebody has to bear the responsibility for the dizziness and for the turns on a State-wide scale. And one can even guess beforehand "theoretically" along what line the split will proceed, or more correctly has already proceeded, by applying the method of elimination. To attribute the excesses in industrialization and collectivization to Voroshilov and Kalinin, is impossible. For everybody knows well enough where the sympathies of these two captives of the Left zig-zag are directed. To attribute the responsibility for the political dizziness to Kuibishev, Dudzutak or Mikoyan, is impossible, because here too, nobody would believe it: for political dizziness something akin to a political head is required. Thus there remains only one—Molotov.

The conclusion arrived at by the method of elimination is substantiated by several Moscow sources. We are informed that, for a considerable time Stalin has been very diligently spreading rumors through various channels that Molotov has become conceited, and that he is always obedient, and interferes with him, Stalin. In conducting a completely inflexible "general line" pulling at his coat-sleeves from the Left. The mechanics of the new zig-zag are thus clear in advance because they reproduce the past we already know. But there is also a difference which consists of revealing the mechanics and accelerating their tempo. An ever greater number of people know how it is done and by what phrases it is covered. It is becoming clear to ever broader circles of the Party that the basic source of two-handedness is the general secretariat, which systematically deceives the Party: it says one thing and does another. An ever greater number of people come to the conclusion that Stalin's leadership is too costly to the Party. Thus, in the mechanics of the Centrist zig-zags and the apparatus crushing, a moment arrives when quantity has to be converted

* Bucharin has repeated another rite of repentance. The others will probably follow after him. Very little of the nature of things will be changed by this. But the character and the order of administrative punishment may turn out to be different. There is no need of saying that our policy does not in the least depend on the waverings within the framework of the apparatus autonomy as a whole.

into quality. The Soviet and Party bureaucracy raised Stalin on the wave of reaction against the October revolution, against War Communism against the convulsions and dangers rooted in the policy of international revolution. In this lies the secret of Stalin's victory. Beginning with 1924, new generations were being reared, and the old ones were being re-educated in the spirit of the theoretical and political reaction of a national-reformist character. Stalin's "Left" reservations—reservations of a cautious Centrist—did not interest anybody. What entered the consciousness was: quietly, bit by bit we will build up socialism without any revolutions in the West; one must not skip over stages; the slower you go—the further you get; why not conclude a bloc with Chiang Kai-Shek, Purcell, Raditch? Why not sign the Kellogg Pact? (Even a piece of string may come in handy on a trip) And above everything—down with the "permanent revolution"—not the theory, with which the majority of the bureaucrats are not in the least concerned, but the international revolutionary policy with its disturbance and risks, when here in the U. S. S. R., there is something real at hand.

This is the philosophy upon which was reared the Stalinist apparatus, numbering millions of people. The majority of the real Stalinist bureaucracy feels deceived by its leader since 1928. "A peaceful growing over" of the October regime into a national state capitalism did not—and could not take place. Coming to the edge of the capitalist precipice Stalin—even though he is no lover of jumps—made a breakneck jump to the Left. The economic contradictions, the dissatisfaction of the masses, the tireless criticism of the Left Opposition, compelled Stalin to make this turn in spite of the partly active and primarily passive resistance of the majority of the apparatus. The turn took place with a gnashing of the teeth of the majority of the bureaucrats. This is the most direct reason why the new stage of "monolithism" was accompanied by an open and cynical establishment of the plebiscitary-personal regime. Only by utilizing its last inertia can Stalin still carry out the smashing of the Rights and also the new turn which will cost him immeasurably more than all the preceding ones.

About a year ago we said that a new squeak is being heard in the apparatus. Since then the squeak has become a clatter. What import has the fact that Syrzov, placed in a high post for the purpose of easing out Rykov, turned out to be the head of the so-called "two-handed", that is people who vote officially for Stalin, but think, and if they can also act differently. How many such Syrzovs are there in the apparatus? Alas, these statistics are inaccessible to Stalin. They can be revealed only in action. The official press characterizes Syrzov as a Right winger. The fact that Syrzov sought a bloc with the Left-Centrists of the type of Lominadze and Schatzkin not only marks an extraordinary confusion in the ranks of the apparatus but also shows that Syrzov is one of those disorientated Right wing apparatus men who have, however, become frightened at the Thermidor.

The Faction of Toadies

There are also others. They are those who vote against Syrzov and Lominadze demand the expulsion of Rykov and Bucharin, swear fealty to the only and beloved leader, and at the same time think a deep thought: how to betray to the best advantage. These are the Agabekova and others. The toadies of the revolution, its bureaucratic flunkies, have succeeded in showing themselves sufficiently in foreign countries. Jumping over the fence, they soon sell themselves to the new boss. How many of them are in the Soviet apparatus inside the country? It is harder to count them than to count the frightened Rights and the honestly confused Centrists. But there are many of them. Stalin's successes, with all his zig-zags systematically settled down in the apparatus in the form of a faction of toadies, who remained devoted "without adulation" even five minutes before complete betrayal. For any kind of independent political, and what is more, historical role this human abomination is absolutely incapable. But it can well play the role of a banana peel upon which the plebiscitary perfection of Stalin will slip.

Once slipping, the Stalinist apparatus will no longer find its previous balance. It has no support of its own under its feet. Will it find support to the Right? No. Two sectors are there: confused and even despairing opportunists, incapable of any ini-

tiative, and bureaucratic flunkies capable only of initiative for betrayal. At the Right, the Centrist elements will find no support. And at the Left? Only here, from the Left wing is it possible to repel the Thermidorian-Bonapartist danger, aggravated by the policy of the Centrists. Does this mean a bloc with Stalin? The struggle of the Bolsheviks against Kornilov who directly attacked the Provisional Government—was that a bloc with Kerensky? In the face of direct counter-revolutionary danger, a common struggle with that part of the Stalinists which will not prove to be on the other side of the barricades, is self-understood.

But this is not the main question. The moment the apparatus split by contradictions and falsehoods, begins to rock, the situation can be saved not by any parts or particles of the apparatus itself but by the Party, the vanguard of the proletariat. Here is the task! Meanwhile the Party as an organizational whole is non-existent. The accumulation of flunkies in the apparatus has meant the destruction of Bolshevism and the Party. In this lies the historical crime of Stalin. But the elements of the Bolshevik Party are extraordinarily numerous, alive and indestructible. No matter how much the apparatus should strive to set them by their ears, the worker-Bolsheviks draw their own conclusions from heavy lessons. Tens of thousands of old Bolsheviks, hundreds of thousands of young potential Bolsheviks will arise in the moment of danger. The bourgeois restoration which will attempt to stretch out its hand towards power will be left without hands.

The Task of the Opposition

The Left Opposition is the vanguard of the Party. In relation to the official Party the same qualities and methods are demanded of it which under normal conditions are required of the Party in relation to the class: an unwavering principled hardness, and at the same time a readiness to move together with the masses, even the smallest step ahead.

In the Party, the voice of alarm must be raised in the nearest future. The Party must begin to find itself. This is inevitable. It flows from the whole situation. By what road will this process go forward? It is impossible to foretell. But matters will come to a deep internal realignment, that is, to the selection and welding together of the real revolutionary proletarian Party from the human dust trampled underfoot by the apparatus.

In the face of the sharp convulsions and acute changes in the situation, it would be doctrinary to bind oneself beforehand by any sort of partial unprincipled organizational-technical slogans to which the slogan of a coalition Central Committee is partially related. We wrote on this subject several weeks ago, on the eve of the last campaign against the Rights. Since then much has changed. But we think even now, that the slogan of a coalition Central Committee may appear to the broad circles of the Party as the only one capable of finding a way out of the chaos. It is understood that the coalition Central Committee in itself would not solve anything; but it could make it easier for the Party to solve the tasks before it, giving it the possibility to find itself with the least possible convulsions. Without a deep internal struggle this is no longer possible; but we must do everything to exclude from this internal struggle a great service to the Party in the most critical moment. It is not the Bolshevik-Leninists who will assist such an agreement. But making it they can now less than ever before, renounce their traditions and their Platform. We must say outright: there is no other banner at present!

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JANUARY 3. ALIGNMENTS FOR THE NEXT WAR

—Max Shachtman.

How close is the next world war? What will be the line-up of the imperialist powers? What role will the United States play in it? What will be its effect on the Soviet Union? These are some of the points that will be discussed at the lecture.

Admission 25c Come Early

Unemployed admitted free upon presentation of Unemployed Branch card. Auspices: New York Branch of the Communist League of America (Opposition).

The Red Fleet Visits Greece

We have received the following letter from our comrades of the Greek Opposition:

"The Red Fleet of the Black Sea arrived at Phalerus on October 11; it remained there until the 14th. We profited by the occasion to distribute Opposition leaflets in Russian among the sailors. A group of 50 comrades, supplied with leaflets, endeavored to board the ships. Our comrades approached the Soviet ships in boats to the tune of the Internationale. The Fleet Commander issued the order to prevent them from boarding. A package of leaflets was then thrown aboard "Tcheronetz Ukrainy." The officers of this ship prohibited the sailors from reading them and threw them into the sea.

"About a hundred comrades on the Phalerus shore threw leaflets into the motorboats that bore the sailors. The police arrested three comrades, but the distribution of leaflets to the sailors and workers of the port (in Greek) continues nevertheless.

"Other groups, scattered in the streets of Athens and Piraeus, especially in the sections visited by the sailors (the Acropolis, museums, etc.) conducted the same work. In spite of the prohibition by the officers, more than 100 sailors took leaflets. Many of them showed a lively sympathy which they tried to conceal before the officers."

In this leaflet, our Greek comrades explain to the Soviet sailors the real situation in the Greek Communist Party and the whole international Communist movement. They point out the internal and external dangers threatening the U. S. S. R. and vow to defend with all their might the U. S. S. R., and the October revolution. They invite the Red sailors to speak out against the errors and crimes of Stalin "who deports Rakovsky and puts Besse-dovsky in his place; who shoots the Left Oppositionist Blumkin and replaces him with the traitor Agabekov."

It is very characteristic that the sailors received the leaflets with sympathy, while the Red Fleet Commander prohibited the workers who sang the Internationale from getting aboard.

Our comrades of the Greek Opposition fraternized with the worker-sailors of the Red Fleet. Their example should be followed everywhere by Oppositions who have the opportunity of making contact with the sailors of the proletarian country.

HOW STALIN FOUGHT BLOOD-LETTING

In the concluding remarks on the political report to the Fourteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, (1925), Stalin declared:

"The Leningrad Provincial Committee passed a resolution demanding the expulsion of comrade Trotsky. We, that is to say, the majority of the Central Committee, were not in favor of such a step. ('Quite right!') After a struggle, we were able to persuade the Leningrad comrades to delete the sentence about expulsion from their resolution. A little later, when the Plenum of the Central Committee met, the Leningrad members, supported by comrade Kamenév, proposed the immediate exclusion of comrade Trotsky from the Political Bureau. We could not accept this proposal of the opposition either. We were in a majority on the Central Committee, and were content to remove comrade Trotsky from his position as people's commissary for war. We did not agree with comrades Zinoviev and Kamenév, for we knew that the policy of lopping-off might entail grave dangers for the Party. The method of lopping-off, the method of blood-letting (it was blood-letting they wanted) is dangerous, and infectious. Today, you lop off one limb; tomorrow, another, the day after tomorrow, a third—and what is left of the Party?" (Applause).

IN THE NEXT ISSUE!

This issue has been considerably delayed because of the difficulties entailed by moving from our old headquarters to the new. In addition, the Militant has been compelled to omit a considerable amount of material of importance, for lack of space. Next issue will contain among other things an article analyzing the thesis of the recent Plenum of the Party Central Committee, an article on the Bank of the United States crash and the Party's policy of organizing the shop-keeper depositors a review of the recent events in China, an article by comrade Trotsky on Thermidorianism and Bonapartism etc., etc.